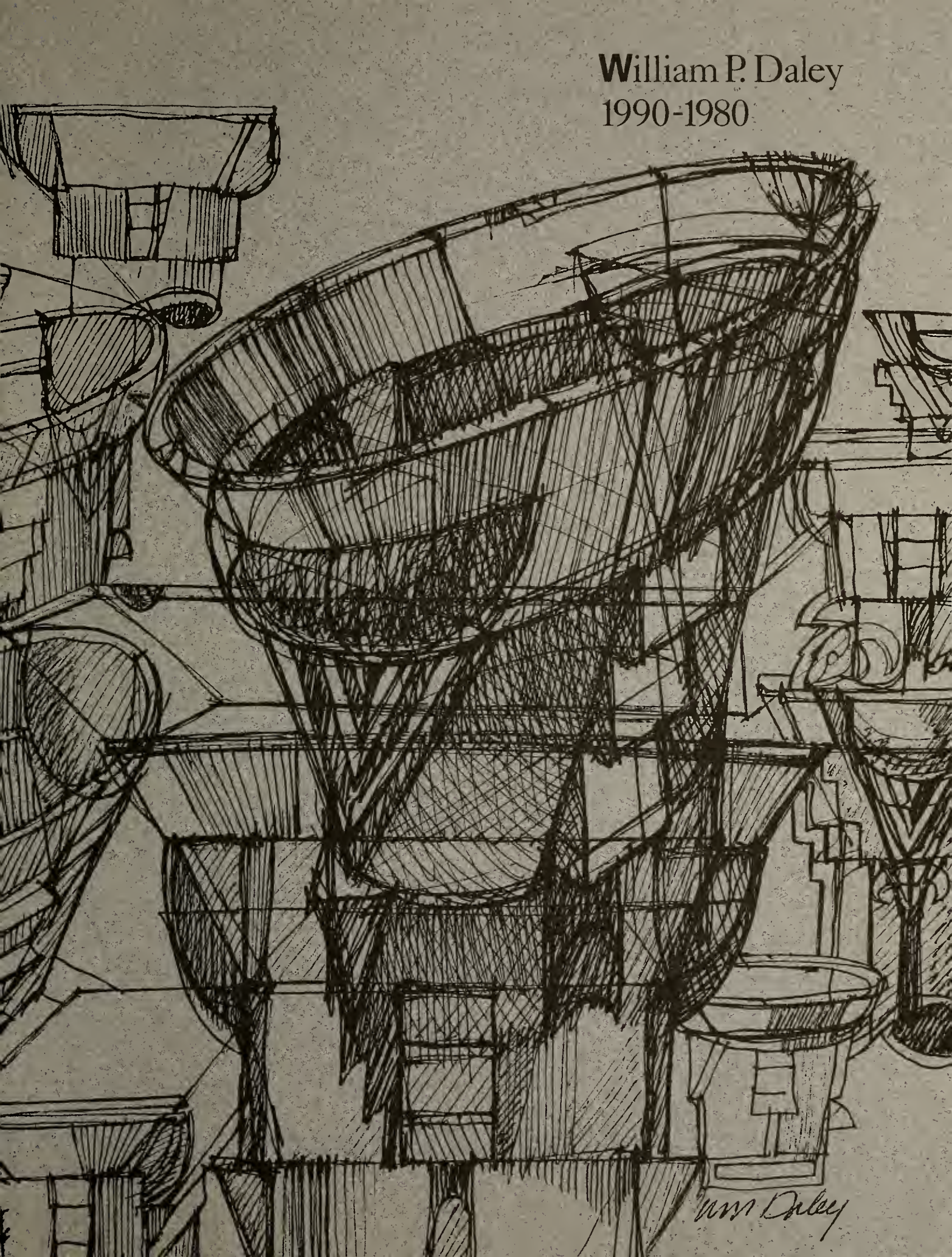
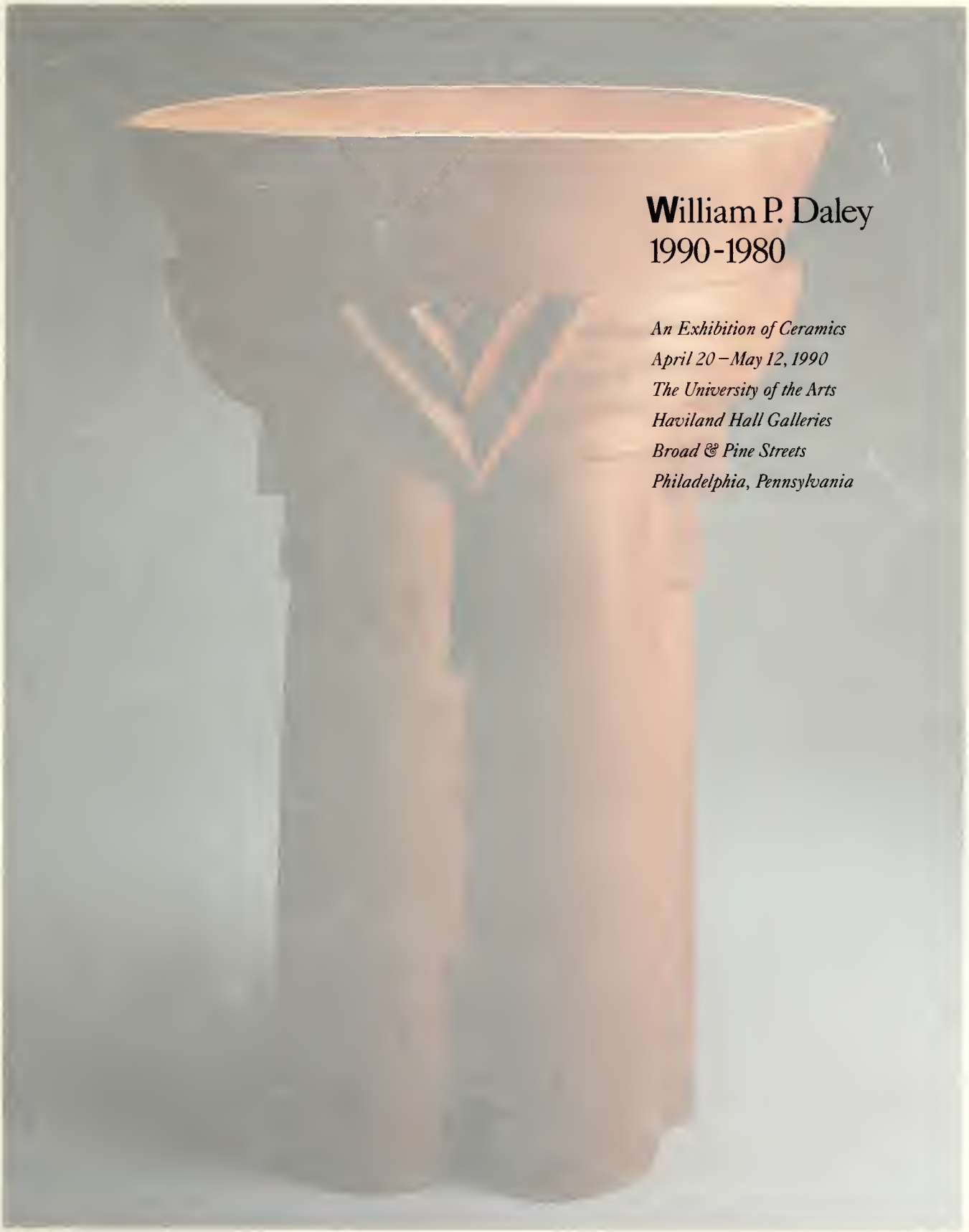
William P. Daley
1990-1980



The twelve ceramic vessels in this catalog are unglazed stoneware, fired to cone six oxidation in an updraft gas kiln. The clay body is made of four clays; Ball Clay, Red Art, Valentine and Missouri Fire Clay.



William P. Daley
1990-1980

An Exhibition of Ceramics
April 20 – May 12, 1990
The University of the Arts
Haviland Hall Galleries
Broad & Pine Streets
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Coupled Place
William Daley 1988
41"H x 35" Oval Top. Unglazed Stoneware
Collection of [illegible]

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41"H x 35" Oval Top. Unglazed Stoneware
Collection of Jane and Leonard Korman

It is anathema to talk about an artist/teacher retiring. The boundaries of the profession are not neatly defined by an eight-hour day, a five-day week, or a mandatory retirement age. It is a practice that is melded into the medium of one's craft, so that it's temporality transcends the mortality of its producer. As we celebrate the "retirement" of William Daley, we are confronted with the paradox of engaging a moment traditionally reserved for summing up someone's achievements and proclaiming, "This is what he did. Now it's time for a well-deserved rest." The transition from "full-time" to emeritus hardly signifies a deceleration of creativity or output for Bill. If anything, it signals the beginning – not the end – of what will likely be the sum of the most important years of his life.

William Daley belongs to a special generation of artists. He is among the many veterans of World War II who entered a previously elite educational system due to the GI bill. These individuals turned to the creative arts after having participated in the wholesale destruction wrought by the war. Attracted, in part, by the desire to segregate themselves from the terror of an industrialized world, and, in part, by the prospect of creating something "productive" (as opposed to destructive), the presence of people like Daley significantly transformed the landscape of the history of art in America. They elevated ceramics from the reified realm of decorative arts into the arena of painting and sculpture, while others were content to remain within the traditional boundaries. While some artists explored issues of scale and gesture akin to Abstract Expressionism, others displayed an affinity for the high culture/low culture dichotomies of Pop Art. Daley took a different direction, and in many ways this path is unique and is responsible for why his work stands alone.

It would not be inappropriate to suggest that his work is a distant cousin of the architectonic concerns of the generation of Minimalists like Donald Judd and Robert Morris, as well as earth artists such as Robert Smithson. Dispensing with the industrial rhetoric of Minimalist sculpture, Daley's insistence on the purity and primacy of geometric structure revealed through forms left "raw" and unpainted have an affinity with the discourse of "original" material present in those movements. Furthermore, the "theatricality" of the relationship between viewer and object is a concern Daley's work shares with these artists. His pieces operate on a scale that is fundamentally informed by that of the human body. However, he is unlike these artists of the sixties and seventies when he dispenses with the de-personalization of the object and opts for a form inscribed with traces of the artist's hand. Finally, his geometry is organic rather than industrial.

Bill's work exceeds the boundaries of categories that operate so well for many of his colleagues. And just as these categories are negated or transgressed by his artistic practice – like the seamless distinctions between interior and exterior in his pots – so too does his entry into a phase called "retirement" signify a transgression of all the attendant meanings associated with such a transition. Retirement indeed. He has his work cut out for him.

Matthew J. W. Drutt
Yale University

Conic Loop
William Daley June 1989
27" x 25" x 16"H. Unglazed Stoneware
Courtesy of Helen Drutt Gallery

Toas Revisited
William Daley January 1989
30" x 24" x 17"H. Unglazed Stoneware
Courtesy of Helen Drutt Gallery

B's Place
William and Catherine Daley August 1985
29" x 27" x 9" H. Unglazed Stoneware
Collection of Barbara and George Schwab

Nothing About Death

The direct, elegant shape of a Daley vessel opens itself to the sky with the trust of an open hand or a waiting mouth. Its nakedness echoes a similar nakedness in ourselves. But the process of comprehending one of these pots, the resolution of contending geometries happens slowly; the large warmths of the planes, angles, curves lead you toward the silence of conclusions that needs long looking to discover.

Perhaps this is because Bill Daley's work has none of the speed or beautiful violences some of the other great ceramics being made today use for their effects. Its calm hollow solids grow from depths far beneath the earth. They face us with a disconcerting generosity. The voluptuous moments, the strict clear repetitions, the areas of uninterrupted space merge and separate endlessly in structures guided by a definitive vision. Someone circling one of his creations feels grateful, but baffled by what Daley is saying to us; someone running his hands over it might hear the first syllables of a chant or prayer, and intuit the gestures of a forgotten ritual. Even the absence of glazes indicates poverty, humility, patience, receptivity, a willingness to give and receive without mediation through the unadorned skin of the vessel itself, like the wafer on the tongue of the suppliant.

I visited Bill in the school studio and we talked about the meaning of his work. "I don't ride the moment. A lot is planned. But then there's the fire. You're submitting the pot to an unpredictable element of nature, a dangerous transforming process; it's like what goes on between parent and child, student and teacher, between all of us exchanging ourselves. My father's in my pots. I'm part of a continuing ritual that's very, very old. Past, present and future flow through it in a single act of communion." And so I heard the theme of the "spiritual" emerge, and Bill freely sketched out the communal use he intends his work to have. His words function as answers to unformulated questions, as footnotes to the mystery and immediacy of what he calls his "offerings".

"I believe in immortality. Nothing ends. I won't do something that doesn't matter – to me, at least. I have a feeling that an artist can beat time. I think what I make can contain spirit – to transcend, perfect, share something I and others always understood. I hope my work triggers and clarifies that understanding. I want to discover something, of course, but not by improvisation: not this or that, but this. Stories can't say it, the unsayable; myths can; geometries are another way of saying it. I'm trying to make the absolute. There's nothing about death in the pots. They're hard, permanent, will last forever. They're ceremonial vessels, and in that sense they express faith. My faith is based on a feeling of community, an accord between people, and between people and things. What makes people go on? Spirit. Desire. A shared present. Accord with oneself, including the ugliness, the fear, the angst. My pots begin where knowledge of the self ends, where you and the pots touch, the way the fire and the clay meet."

No theory helps us to become deeply familiar with these mazes of graduated light and shadow, to "journey in them," as Bill calls it, to reach the vulnerable core. They invite, like an unsheathing of the soul in cold sun, some nameless silent presence, or absence, some inaccessible necessary god who, finally, arrives and takes its place inside you.

Stephen Berg

Oval Ark
William Daley April 1988
24" x 25" x 15"H. Unglazed Stoneware
Collection of Drs. Harry and Betty Gottlieb

Remembered Place
William and Catherine Daley September 1985
23" x 24" x 16" H. Unglazed Stoneware
Collection of Sandy and Lou Grotta

Triaxial Opening
William and Catherine Daley February 1985
26" x 22" x 20"H. Unglazed Stoneware
Collection of Judy and Joel Golden

Bill Daley in person, as in his work, reveals varied presences. He may come into your office leading a freshman class in a spontaneous parade wearing their constructed head-dress pieces and masks. Another day, after a festive studio "clay-bake", he will arrive with a plate of charred fish to share. In contrast, he can stir a national audience by his eloquence at a College Art Association meeting. As an impassioned artist and devoted teacher he has been friend, critic and mentor to countless young people of talent; to mention his name brings immediate, respectful recognition from colleagues across the nation.

Bill has said that his works are like his family who, with friends, "share the past and by their regard assure the future." So do his energy and teaching draw on heritage while encouraging risk. Always dynamic, he savors encounter, connection and community.

He has served the campus in leadership of design and crafts and it was a pleasure, this past year, to honor him with appointment as our first Distinguished University Professor.

Bill and I are of the generation that returned to school as Veterans more than four decades ago. We thought that in our own search for definition and form we might help reshape a new world. Bill is still doing it.

Ed Colker
Provost, The University of the Arts

My thanks to the Philadelphia College of Art and Design, the University of the Arts and all who have contributed to the celebration of my formal retirement from teaching. It's a time for looking forward and remembering the past. I would like to thank a few among the many who are no longer at the school. People like Joseph Carreiro, Emanuel Benson, George Bunker and Howard Wolf who afforded me singular opportunities. I particularly enjoy the generational quality of this catalog and express my thanks to my daughter Barbara for designing it and to Matthew Drutt for writing the essay. They have grown up living with the work.

My profound thanks to all the students who have made the exchanges called teaching a grand satisfaction. I have been most fortunate to teach with magnificent colleagues. High among them is Sharon Church, Chairperson of the Craft Department, who conceived the plans for the exhibition and catalog. She wrote the Pennsylvania State Council Grant request, and organized the successful fund raising raffle. I thank her for her special efforts. I am grateful to my dear friends and former colleagues, Wayne Bates, Richard Reinhardt and Petras Vaskys who contributed their artwork to be raffled. I am also grateful to my ceramic colleagues, Liz Stewart and Larry Donahue for their fund raising efforts as the designers, developers and sales force of the national "Daley T-shirt" campaign. I am particularly grateful to the Alumni and friends who contributed directly to the catalog fund. We thank the Pennsylvania State Council of the Arts for partially funding this venture. A special thanks to Helen W. Drutt English for her contribution as Curator of the show. Thanks to my colleague Stephen Berg for confirming my efforts in his catalog tribute. My thanks to Ed Colker, our Provost for writing in the catalog and Steve Tarantal our Dean for his help in making this come about. My thanks to Hayes Design for their support, to Lisa Naples and Sarah Tomaka for setting the type, and to James Quail for his marvelous photographs of these works, which are largely from collectors in the Philadelphia area.

I especially wish to thank all the collectors included in this decade of work. I hope at some future time I can have a more extensive show where space permits the presentation of early (1957-1980) work collected by those who helped me begin.

Last and first I wish to thank my wife Catherine for all her help with the work in the exhibition and all its connections to our life. She has supported my caprice, accepted my weaknesses and offered her energies unselfishly to all our undertakings.

William Daley

Friendly Location
William and Catherine Daley October 1981
20" x 24" x 18"H. Unglazed Stoneware
Collection of Helen W. Drutt English

Keyed Steps
William and Catherine Daley January 1982
22" x 20" x 15"H. Unglazed Stoneware
Collection of Edna Beron

Triaxial Procession
William and Catherine Daley June 1982
25" x 21" x 21"H. Unglazed Stoneware
Collection of Helen and Jack Bershad

Kufic Center
William and Catherine Daley July 1981
23" x 21" x 21"H. Unglazed Stoneware
Collection of Donna and Thomas Daley

William P. Daley

Born: March 7, 1925, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY

Education:

1950 B.S. Massachusetts College of Art

1951 M.A. Columbia University–Teachers College

Honors:

1977 N.E.A. Grant

1980 Massachusetts College of Art Citation for Outstanding Achievement in the Visual Arts

1983 Honorary Life Membership: National Council on Education/Ceramic Arts

1988 Elected College of Fellows–American Craft Council

1989 First University Distinguished Professor University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA

Public Collections:

National Museum of American Art Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.

Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA

The Saint Louis Museum of Art, MO

Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY

Campbell Museum, Camden, NJ

Dienst Beeldende Kunst, Hertogenbosh, Holland

The National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul, Korea

Victoria Albert Museum, London, England

Selected Exhibitions 1990 to 1980:

1990 Solo Exhibition–Helen Drutt Gallery, NY, NY

"William Daley 1990-1980"–University of the Arts, Haviland Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

1989 Craft Today U.S.A., *touring Europe*, Musée des Art Decoratifs, Paris, France

Second International Ceramics Competition, *invited exhibitor*, Mino, Japan

American Clay Artists 1989–Clay Studio, Port of History Museum, Philadelphia, PA

The Craft Enigma–University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA

1988 Investigations of the Mind–Helen Drutt Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

Power Over the Clay, *traveling exhibition*–The Detroit Institute of Arts, MI

American Ceramics Now: The 27th Ceramic National Exhibition, *traveling*–Everson Museum, Syracuse, NY

New Acquisitions–Renwick Gallery National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

East West Ceramics Exhibition–The Korean Culture and Arts Foundation 24th Olympics, Seoul, Korea

Solo Exhibition–Chicago International New Art Forms Exposition, Chicago, IL

Solo Exhibition–Helen Drutt Gallery, Phila., PA

1986 "American Potters Today"–Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England

Contemporary Arts: An Expanded View The Monmouth Museum, Monmouth, NJ

"Ceramic Artists Works on Paper"–Lowe Art Gallery, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

Architecture of the Vessel–Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY

Contemporary American Ceramics–The National Museum of Contemporary Arts, Seoul, Korea

1985 Solo Exhibition–Garth Clark Gallery, NY, NY

"William Daley: Ten Vessels"–Fosdick Nelson Gallery, Alfred University, NY and Pewabic Society Gallery, Detroit, MI

"Ceramic Art of the 70's: A Review of a Decade" Exhibit A, Chicago, IL

1984 "Clay Vessels, Works by Ten Modern Masters" Palo Alto Cultural Center, Palo Alto, CA

"Art in Craft Media"–Curated/Jack Lenor Larson, Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton, Long Island, NY

1983 Solo Exhibition–Helen Drutt Gallery, Phila., PA

Three Person Exhibition, Betty Woodman/Elsa Rady/William Daley–Douglas Drake Gallery, Kansas City, MO

"Echoes Historical Reference in Contemporary Ceramics"–Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO

"American Clay Artists"–Clay Studio, Phila., PA

1982 Retrospective "Selected Works, 1954-1982" Carreiro Gallery, Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, MA

1981 Solo Exhibition–Exhibit A, Chicago, IL

"25th Anniversity of American Crafts Museum" American Crafts Museum, New York, NY

"American Ceramics–from the Joan Manheimer Collection"–Univ. of Iowa Museum, Iowa City, IA

1980 Solo Exhibition–Helen Drutt Gallery, Phila., PA

"The Contemporary American Potter" University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA

Publications:

American Potters, The Work of Twenty Masters, by Garth Clark

The New Ceramics, Trends and Traditions, by Peter Dormer

American Ceramics, 1876 to the present, by Garth Clark

Ceramics: A Potters Handbook, fifth edition, by Glen C. Nelson

Keramk der Welt, by Gottfried Borrman

Hexed Square Up
William and Catherine Daley August 1980
16" x 16" x 35"H. Unglazed Stoneware
Collection of Vincent Lim and Robert Tooey

The catalog and exhibition "William P. Daley 1990-1980" is testament to the great love and respect so many people have for Bill. Initial funding from The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts gave our project its impetus and strength, while full realization came about through donations made by the many individuals who have come to know Bill over the years – students, alumni, colleagues, fellow teachers, university staff, collectors, critics, gallery owners, friends. We are very grateful for such generous support – thank you all.

Sharon Church
Chairperson, Craft Department
The University of the Arts

Jin Hwan Bae
Wayne Bates
Edna Beron
Jill Bonovitz
George Bunker
The Clay Studio
Samuel Crothers Associates
Kathleen Dalzell
Dorothy Browning Dominey
Larry Donahue
Helen Drutt Gallery
Michelle Dunn-Langosch
Helen Williams English
Alfred Fenaughty
Edward Frascella
Judy & Joel Golden
Steve Goldner
Elizabeth Hicks
Alec Karros
Jane & Leonard Korman
Marge Levy
Graham Marks
Charlotte Martin
Mr. & Mrs. Marlin Miller, Jr.
Pat Pusey Mooberry
Edith Neff
Jennifer Pickett
Richard Reinhardt
Edward Roberts
David Rue
Emily Schnebley
Barbara & George Schwab
Lizbeth Stewart
Natalie Wieters
Petras Vaskys
Sybille Zeldin
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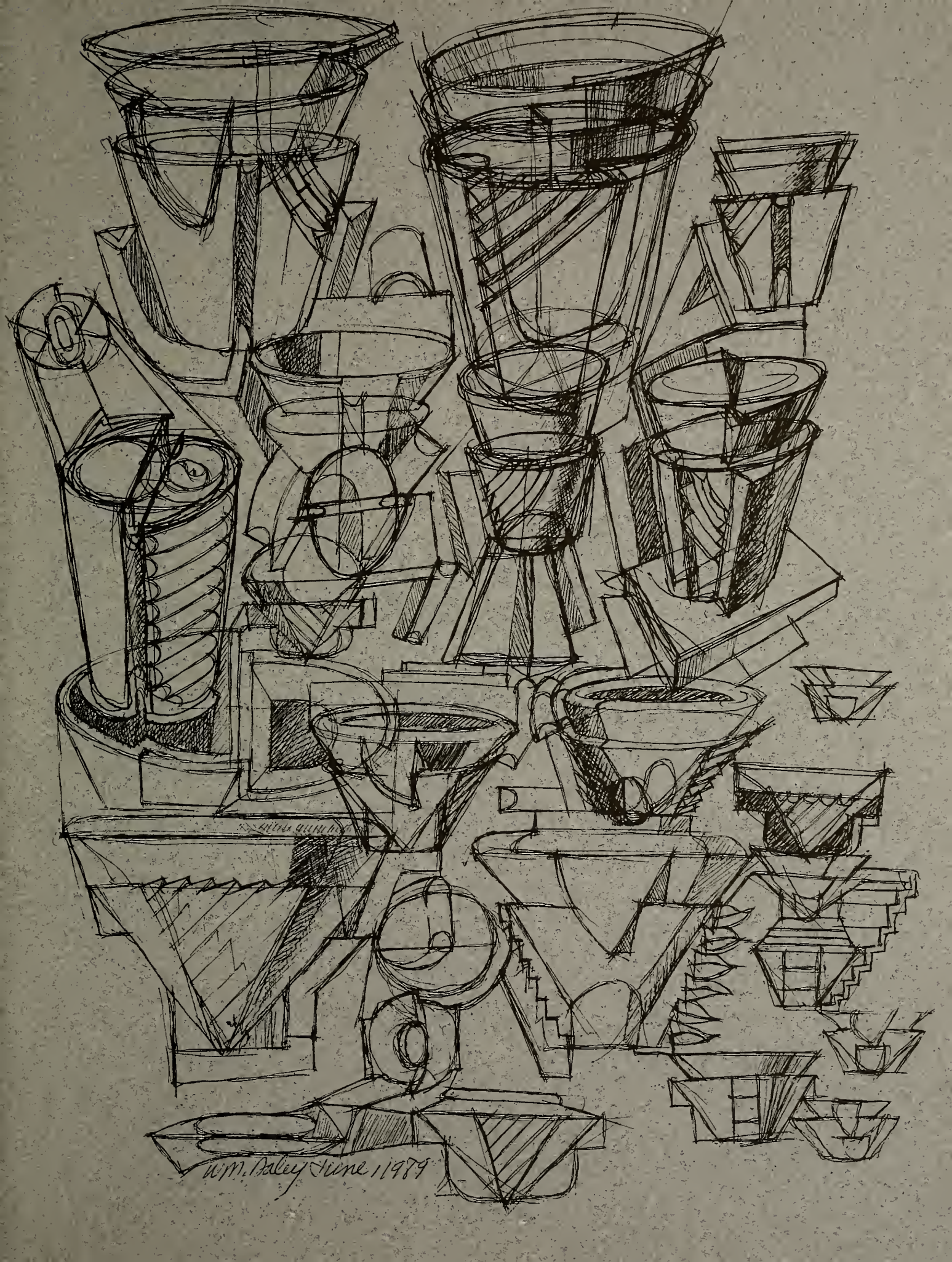
Wm. Daley June 1989

This catalog and exhibition have been sponsored in part
by a grant from The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.